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NATO CONFIDENTIAL FROM WASHINGTON

POLITICAL ANALYSIS: SIGNS OF RENEWED DEBATE OVER
STRATEGIC POSTURE IN THE USSR

BEGIN SUMMARY. CONTROVERSY OVER WHETHER VICTORY IS
POSSIBLE IN NUCLEAR WAR HAS REVIVED IN THE SOVIET UNION
IN A MANNER REMINISCENT OF THE DEBATE WHICH RAGED OVER
STRATEGIC POLICY UNDER KHRUSHCHEV.

CIVILIAN OFFICIALS HAVE TENDED TO POINT UP THE FUTILITY
OF NUCLEAR WAR; MILITARY SPOKESMEN HAVE ARGUED THAT IF
GENERAL WAR BREAKS OUT, THE SOVIET UNION MUST HAVE THE
FORCES TO WIN IT.

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THE CIVILIANS' VIEWPOINT WOULD BE A PREMISE FOR ARGUING
IN BEHALF OF A MORE CONCILIATORY STANCE AT SALT II, AND
THE MILITARY'S WOULD SUGGEST NEED FOR A TOUGHER
BARGAINING POSITION.

WHILE VIEWPOINTS HAVE NOT YET POLARIZED TO THE EXTENT SEEN IN THE EARLY 1960'S, THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THE PARTY LEADERSHIP IS ATTEMPTING TO QUIET THE CONTROVERSY. MOREOVER, UNLIKE THE SITUATION WHICH PREVAILED UNDER KHRUSHCHEV, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT BREZHNEV IS A MAJOR PROTAGONIST. AT THE OUTSET OF HIS RULE, HE EVIDENTLY WAS THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE MILITARY IN THE POLITBURO. ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOW BECOME THE SPOKESMAN FOR DETENTE, HE HAS NOT IGNORED THE MILITARY'S INSISTENCE ON THE NEED TO KEEP ONE'S GUARD UP.

SOONER OR LATER, HARD DECISIONS MUST BE TAKEN, AND BREZHNEV WILL PERFORCE BECOME INTIMATELY INVOLVED. BUT HE HAS PROVEN ADEPT AT FORMING CONSENSUS IN THE LEADERSHIP. THUS, EVEN WHEN THESE DECISIONS ARE TAKEN, THEY APPEAR UNLIKELY TO THREATEN HIS POWER POSITION.
END SUMMARY.

1. ANTECEDENTS OF THE CURRENT DEBATE: NOT LONG AFTER STALIN'S DEATH A DOCTRINAL ARGUMENT OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF VICTORY IN NUCLEAR WAR MASKED A DISPUTE ABOUT SOVIET STRATEGIC POLICY. PREMIER MALENKOV, ADDRESSING THE SUPREME SOVIET ON MARCH 13, 1954, SAID THAT "A FRESH WORLD CARNAGE, GIVEN MODERN METHODS OF WARFARE, MEANS THE RUIN OF WORLD CIVILIZATION." MALENKOV APPARENTLY FELT THAT A COMBINATION OF SOVIET NUCLEAR STRENGTH AND CONCILIATORY POLICIES COULD ASSURE PEACE FOR A LONG TIME AND THUS MAKE POSSIBLE A RISE IN THE SOVIET STANDARD OF LIVING. MALENKOV'S RIVALS, ALLIED WITH KHRUSHCHEV, CONTENDED THAT A NEW WAR WOULD ONLY MEAN THE END OF CAPITALISM--A POSITION NECESSITATING A MORE ELABORATE AND MORE EXPENSIVE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT--AND USED THIS ARGUMENT, AMONG OTHERS, TO BRING HIM DOWN. AFTER MALENKOV'S DOWNFALL, KHRUSHCHEV EMBRACED THE MALENKOV CONSUMER-ORIENTED THEME, AND SHORTLY AFTERWARD THE DEBATE BROKE OUT AGAIN.
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2. THIS TIME THE DEBATE CENTERED NOT UPON HEAVY VERSUS LIGHT INDUSTRY BUT UPON FORCE STRUCTURE. WITH THE ADVENT OF EVEN MORE EXPENSIVE NUCLEAR DELIVERY SYSTEMS THE QUESTION OF COST BECAME CRUCIAL. KHRUSHCHEV EVIDENTLY DECIDED THAT STRATEGIC NUCLEAR SYSTEMS, ESPECIALLY MISSILES, OFFERED SUCH OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE SOVIET INTERESTS THAT THE USSR COULD RISK DE-EMPHASIZING ITS GENERAL-PURPOSE FORCES IN ORDER TO

PAY FOR SUCH SYSTEMS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME DEVOTING INCREASED RESOURCES TO CONSUMER WELFARE. IN JANUARY 1960 HE ANNOUNCED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW COMMAND, THE STRATEGIC ROCKET FORCES, AND SIMULTANEOUSLY CALLED FOR

A ONE-THIRD REDUCTION OF THE NUMBER OF MEN UNDER ARMS.

3. SEARCHING FOR IDEOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION, KHRUSHCHEV INVOKED THE 1924 MILITARY REFORM OF DE FACTO MINISTER OF DEFENSE FRUNZE. BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC STRINGENCIES OF THE TIME, WHICH ALSO SAW A DETENTE POLICY SYMBOLIZED BY THE RAPALLO PACT, FRUNZE DECREED A CHANGEOVER FROM A FULLTIME ARMY TO A MIXED ONE COMPRISING CADRE AND TERRITORIAL MILITIA UNITS, AND ORDERED A GROSS REDUCTION IN THE SIZE OF THE OFFICER CORPS. KHRUSHCHEV'S REFORM, OF COURSE, ENCOUNTERED GREAT RESISTANCE IN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND AFTER THE U-2 INCIDENT IN MAY 1960 WAS CURTAILED DRASTICALLY. REDUCTION IN EXPENDITURES FOR GENERAL-PURPOSE FORCES TO PAY FOR NEW STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE SYSTEMS LEVELED OFF. FOR THIS, AND OTHER REASONS, THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT STOOD BY WHEN KHRUSHCHEV'S POLITICAL OPPONENTS MOUNTED A PALACE COUP.

4. THE BREZHNEV LEADERSHIP, SEEKING TO PLACATE THE MILITARY, AS WELL AS OTHER VESTED INTEREST GROUPS, INCREASED DEFENSE EXPENDITURES FOR GENERAL-PURPOSE FORCES IN ADDITION TO THOSE FOR STRATEGIC FORCES. AT GREAT COST THEY HAVE ACHIEVED "EQUIVALENCY" WITH THE UNITED STATES IN STRATEGIC POWER. ECONOMIC STRINGENCIES REMAIN, HOWEVER, AND THE RISING COST OF EVER MORE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS SYSTEMS CONTINUES TO ESCALATE. SINCE SOVIET RESOURCES ARE LIMITED, IT SEEMS ONLY
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LOGICAL THAT ADVOCATES OF DECREASED EXPENDITURES ON THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND THEIR OPPONENTS WITHIN IT HAVE ONCE AGAIN BEGUN TO SPEAK OUT.

5. THE CURRENT DEBATE: INTERNAL DISAGREEMENT OVER THE UTILITY OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS FOR GAINING POLITICAL ADVANTAGE HAS AGAIN SURFACED AT A TIME WHEN DECISIONS ARE BEING TAKEN ON SUCH COSTLY ARMS PROGRAMS AS DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEW MIRV-CONFIGURED MISSILE SYSTEMS NOW UNDERGOING TESTING. THE FIRST ROUND OF THE PUBLIC DEBATE WAS TOUCHED OFF BY A. YE. BOVIN, AN ASSOCIATE OF THE U.S.-A. INSTITUTE OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND A LEADER OF A GROUP OF CONSULTANTS ATTACHED TO THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE. SINCE THEN THERE HAS BEEN A SERIES OF SKIRMISHES INVOLVING NOT ONLY MILITARY THEORISTS

BUT SUCH POLITICAL FIGURES AS G.A. ARBATOV, DIRECTOR OF THE U.S.-A. INSTITUTE, AND MARSHAL A.A. GRECHKO, USSR MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND MEMBER OF THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE POLITBURO.

6. THE FIRST TO ACKNOWLEDGE A CLASH OF OPINION ON STRATEGIC DOCTRINE WAS COLONEL I. SIDELNIKOV, WRITING

IN THE NEWSPAPER OF THE USSR DEFENSE MINISTRY, "RED STAR" (AUGUST 14, 1973): "OUR MILITARY-THEORETICAL THOUGHT DOES NOT CEASE TO FORMULATE THE BASIC PROBLEMS OF THE MARXIST-LENINIST TEACHING ABOUT WAR AND THE ARMY, INCLUDING TOO THE PROBLEM OF WAR AS A CONTINUATION OF POLICY BY OTHER, VIOLENT MEANS. THIS PROBLEM HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST ACUTE. IT ACQUIRES STILL GREATER ACUTENESS IN CONNECTION WITH THE APPEARANCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THEORETICIANS AND PUBLICISTS ARE ONCE MORE RETURNING TO IT. MANY OF THEM CONNECT INTERPRETATION OF THE GIVEN PROBLEM WITH DETENTE AND THE SOVIET-AMERICAN AGREEMENT ON PREVENTING NUCLEAR WAR. DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS ARE EXPRESSED." SIDELNIKOV TOOK THE OFFICIAL POSITION THAT IT WAS STILL TOO EARLY TO SPEAK OF THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF THE NUCLEAR THREAT. BUT HE ADDED THE CAVEAT THAT IN SPITE OF THE DESTRUCTIVENESS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS THEY MIGHT STILL BE USED FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF POLITICAL ENDS: "NO WEAPON AT ALL CAN CONFIDENTIAL

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CHANGE THE POLITICAL ESSENCE OF WAR. IT WAS AND REMAINS THE CONTINUATION OF THE POLICY OF STATES AND CLASSES BY VIOLENT MEANS."

7. THE SAME WARY STANCE WAS TAKEN BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LT. GEN. (RESERVE) S. LOTOTSKIY IN THE ISSUE OF THE HISTORICAL MAGAZINE OF THE DEFENSE MINISTRY SIGNED TO PRESS ON AUGUST 16, 1973. LOTOTSKIY HELD THAT UNLEASHING OF NUCLEAR WAR IS ACCEPTABLE FOR WESTERN STATES, AND HE VENTURED THE POSSIBILITY OF VICTORY IN SUCH A CONFLICT. MOREOVER, AN INTERESTING ANGLE REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUANTITATIVE ASPECT OF A COUNTRY'S NUCLEAR ARSENAL WAS ALSO POINTED OUT BY LOTOTSKIY: "MARXIST-LENINIST METHODOLOGY ALLOWS FOR CORRECT SOLUTION OF THE QUESTION OF THE MUTUAL CONNECTION OF POLICY AND ARMED VIOLENCE IN MISSILE-NUCLEAR WAR, IF IT IS UNLEASHED BY THE IMPERIALISTS. LIKE THE FIRST AND SECOND WORLD WARS, IT WOULD BE A CONTINUATION OF THE POLICY OF IMPERIALIST STATES. IN THIS WAR, IF IT CANNOT BE PREVENTED, VICTORY WILL BE ON THE SIDE OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD SOCIALIST

SYSTEM, WHICH UPHOLDS THE PROGRESSIVE TENDENCY IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO KEEP THIS IN MIND INSOFAR AS THE QUESTION OF THE ESSENCE OF MISSILE-NUCLEAR WAR HAS BEEN INCORRECTLY INTERPRETED IN A NUMBER OF WORKS BY BOURGEOIS MILITARY THEORISTS, WHO HAVE NOT MASTERED THE SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGY. MARXISM-LENINISM TEACHES THAT WARS ALWAYS WERE AND WILL REMAIN A CONTINUATION OF THE POLICY OF ONE OR ANOTHER CLASS OR STATE UNTIL THE SOCIAL AND NATIONAL REASONS WHICH ENGENDER THEM DISAPPEAR. THIS FULLY APPLIES AS WELL

TO A POSSIBLE MISSILE-NUCLEAR WAR....ONE OF THE LAW-GOVERNED PATTERNS ALSO CONSISTS IN THE FACT THAT A REFINED WEAPON EXERTS A BASIC INFLUENCE ON CHANGING THE METHOD AND FORMS OF WAGING WAR ONLY WHEN IT HAS BEEN ACCUMULATED IN LARGE NUMBERS (VOENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, NO. 9, 1973)."

8. A DOMESTIC COUNTERPART OF THE "MISTAKEN WESTERN EXPERTS" WAS PINPOINTED WHEN MILITARY THEORIST COLONEL CONFIDENTIAL

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YE. RYBKIN REPROACHED SOVIET ANALYST OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS BOVIN FOR NOT SAYING "A SINGLE WORD" ABOUT "THE MARXIST-LENINIST DETERMINATION OF WAR AS A CONTINUATION OF POLICY" DURING HIS TREATMENT OF RELEVANT QUESTIONS (COMMUNIST OF THE ARMED FORCES, NO. 20, 1973). BOVIN HAD DISMISSED THE IDEA OF NUCLEAR WAR AS A REALISTIC POLICY ALTERNATIVE IN AN ARTICLE PENNED FOR THE SOVIET MAGAZINE "NEW TIMES" (JULY 1973): "TO TRY TO SETTLE THAT ARGUMENT (BETWEEN SOCIALISM AND CAPITALISM) IN THE CATAclysm OF A WORLD THERMONUCLEAR WAR WOULD BE SUICIDAL."

9. AN ENCOURAGING ASSESSMENT OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF NUCLEAR WAR BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS WAS GIVEN BY REAR ADMIRAL AND PROFESSOR V.V. SHELYAG, DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES AND A LONG-TIME WORKER OF THE MAIN POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SOVIET ARMY AND NAVY, A PARTY BODY WHICH IS ENTRUSTED WITH INSURING THE POLITICAL LOYALTY OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. SHELYAG NOTED IN "RED STAR" ON FEBRUARY 7, 1974, THAT "IN THE WEST" IT IS "WIDELY ASSERTED THAT MANKIND AND WORLD CIVILIZATION WOULD DIE AND EVERYTHING LIVING ON EARTH WOULD BE DESTROYED IN THE EVENT OF WAR." HE AGREED THAT A THERMONUCLEAR WAR WOULD BE "THE GREATEST MISFORTUNE FOR PEOPLE," BUT INSISTED THAT "THE MOOD OF COMMUNISTS IS FAR FROM ONE OF FUTILITY AND PESSIMISM." IF THE WESTERN POWERS INITIATED A WAR AGAINST THE USSR, ASSERTED SHELYAG, THE SOVIET'S NUCLEAR POTENTIAL WOULD

BE A MEANS OF "ROUTING THE AGGRESSOR" AND CONSEQUENTLY A MEANS OF "DEFENDING CIVILIZATION."

10. ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, MARSHAL GRECHKO IN EARLY 1974 TENDED TO LEND RESPECTABILITY TO THE TOUGHMINDED STATEMENTS OF MILITARY COMMUNISTS. IN THE COLUMNS OF THE LEADING PARTY MAGAZINE, GRECHKO REAFFIRMED THE VALIDITY OF BOLSHEVIK ORTHODOXIES IN REGARD TO WAR AND WESTERN DEMOCRACIES: "LENIN'S TENET ON THE ESSENCE OF WAR AS THE CONTINUATION OF POLICY BY VIOLENT MEANS IS TO THIS VERY DAY THE KEY TO CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTENT OF PAST AND PRESENT WARS. 'THE SAME POLICY

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THAT A CERTAIN POWER OR A CERTAIN CLASS WITHIN THAT POWER HAS BEEN PURSUING FOR A LONG TIME BEFORE THE WAR IS INEVITABLY AND UNAVOIDABLY CONTINUED DURING THE WAR BY THAT SAME CLASS, CHANGING ONLY THE MODUS OPERANDI,' HE NOTED. PRESENT-DAY IMPERIALIST IDEOLOGUES ARE STRIVING IN EVERY WAY TO PROVE THAT WAR HAS CEASED TO BE AN INSTRUMENT OF POLICY IN OUR TIME. WAR AND AGGRESSION ALWAYS HAVE BEEN AND WILL REMAIN THE INEVITABLE ACCOMPANIMENT OF CAPITALIST SOCIETY. NOR HAS PRESENT-DAY IMPERIALISM CHANGED ITS AGGRESSIVE NATURE. IT IS IMPERIALISM THAT IS TO BLAME FOR THE FACT THAT BLOODY WARS--THE CONTINUATION OF THE SAME OLD IMPERIALIST POLICY OF PILLAGE AND BRIGANDAGE--ARE UNLEASHED AND WAGED (KOMMUNIST, NO. 3, 1974.)"

11. IN RIPOSTE TO THESE WARNINGS OF THE MILITARY ABOUT LOWERING THE SOVIETS' GUARD, CIVILIAN OFFICIALS SUCH AS BOVIN HAVE ARGUED THE FUTILITY OF NUCLEAR WAR. V.G. DOLGIN, DEPUTY CHIEF OF AN UNIDENTIFIED SECTION AT THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARIAT, EMPHATICALLY REJECTED THE MILITARY'S BELIEF IN THE PROSPECT OF NUCLEAR VICTORY AND THE NECESSITY OF VAST WEAPONS STOCKPILES: "ONE OF THE DECISIVE FACTORS STRENGTHENING THE PRINCIPLE OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AS NORM OF INTER-STATE RELATIONS IS THE GROWTH OF THE MILITARY POTENTIAL OF THE TWO OPPOSING SYSTEMS, THE SCOPE OF WHICH MAKES HOPELESS THE SOLUTION OF CONFLICTS BY MILITARY MEANS. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, IT IS OF NO IMPORTANCE THAT ONE, SEVERAL OR MANY NUCLEAR DEVICES WILL WIPE FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH CITIES AND EVEN ENTIRE STATES, TURN OUR PLANET INTO A CHAOS OF CHAIN REACTIONS, GLOBAL DISASTERS AND UNDERMINE THE CONDITIONS FOR THE

EXISTENCE OF MANKIND (PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY, NO. 1, 1974)."

„ MAKING THE SAME CASE FOR RESTRAINT IN THE OUTPUT OF NUCLEAR ARMS, ARBATOV, DIRECTOR OF THE U.S.A. INSTITUTE, DREW ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE PRUSSIAN GENERAL WHOSE DEFINITION OF WAR-AS-POLITICS WAS SO WARMLY APPROVED BY LENIN: "IT CAN BE SAID THAT WITH THE EMERGENCE OF
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NUCLEAR MISSILES 'ANY CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE POLITICAL ENDS OF WAR' AND THE MEANS WAS LOST (CLAUSEWITZ, ON WAR, VOL. 2, MOSCOW, 1936, P. 379), SINCE NO POLICY CAN HAVE THE OBJECTIVE OF DESTROYING THE

ENEMY AT THE COST OF COMPLETE SELF-ANNIHILATION"
(PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND SOCIALISM, NO. 2, 1974).

13. BOVIN REENTERS THE CONTROVERSY: BOVIN RESPONDED TO THE ORTHODOX MILITARY THEORISTS IN THE COLUMNS OF THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOVIET YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE (MOLODOI KOMMUNIST, NO. 4, SIGNED TO PRESS ON APRIL 4, 1974). URGING MULTI-SIDED COOPERATION BETWEEN STATES, HE EXPLAINED THAT SUCH COOPERATION IS ACHIEVED THROUGH "A COMPLEX OF VARIOUS AGREEMENTS WHICH ARE "MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE." THIS REQUIRES 'MUTUAL CONCESSIONS AND COMPROMISES" SINCE EACH OF THE POWERS INVOLVED "UNDERSTANDS (OR MUST UNDERSTAND) THAT IN ORDER TO RECEIVE SOMETHING, HE MUST GIVE SOMETHING."

14. BOVIN SAW AT THE ROOT OF THE SOVIET-AMERICAN AGREEMENT TO PREVENT NUCLEAR WAR "A SOBER, REALISTIC CALCULATION, AN UNDERSTANDING BY US RULING CIRCLES OF THE CATASTROPHIC NATURE OF GLOBAL THERMONUCLEAR CONFLICT, AN UNDERSTANDING THAT IT IS BETTER TO CO-EXIST, AND EXIST PEACEFULLY, THAN TO CEASE TO EXIST AT ALL." HE OPENLY ASSUMED THAT US DECISIONMAKERS ARE RATIONAL MEN AND WILL NOT INITIATE NUCLEAR WAR AGAINST THE USSR IN VIEW OF ITS DETERRENT POWER: "BUT CLAUSEWITZ'S FORMULA ALSO...CONFRONTS THE STATESMAN WITH A CHOICE- A GIVEN POLITICAL OBJECTIVE CAN BE ATTAINED EITHER PEACEFULLY OR WITH THE AID OF ARMED VIOLENCE. BOTH VARIANTS ARE PERMISSIBLE AND FULLY JUSTIFIED--BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO SELECT THE ONE MORE SUITABLE FOR GIVEN CONDITIONS....(NOWADAYS) CAN ONE REGARD A GENERAL THERMONUCLEAR WAR AS A "DIFFERENT" BUT NONETHELESS SENSIBLE INSTRUMENT OF STATE POLICY, THAT IS, AN EXPEDIENT VARIANT OF POLITICAL BEHAVIOR?

APPARENTLY, IT SHOULD BE REGARDED AS PROVEN THAT THE POTENTIAL OF A RETALIATORY STRIKE DEPRIVES SUCH A
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CHOICE OF ANY RATIONALITY AND AUTOMATICALLY TURNS AN INSTRUMENT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST AN ENEMY INTO AN INSTRUMENT OF THE AGGRESSOR'S SELF-DESTRUCTION. THEREFORE, STAYING WITHIN THE LIMITS OF REASON, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND ARGUMENTS AND TO IDENTIFY A GOAL WHICH WOULD JUSTIFY THE UNLEASHING OF GENERAL MISSILE-NUCLEAR WAR.

15. BOVIN ACCORDINGLY ENDORSED THE RESULTS OF SALT I AND AGAIN PAID TRIBUTE TO WESTERN STATESMEN: "THE SOVIET-AMERICAN AGREEMENTS IN THE MILITARY-STRATEGIC SPHERE INDICATE THAT THE OBJECTIVE CHANGES IN THE CORRELATION OF CLASS FORCES HAVE BECOME A SUBJECTIVE MOTIVE OF POLITICAL ACTIONS AND DECISIONS. STOCKPILES

OF THE MISSILE-NUCLEAR WEAPON ARE NOW SUCH THAT THEORETICALLY THE DANGER OF DESTROYING LIFE ON OUR PLANET IS A REAL ONE. THE TIME HAS COME TO SOLVE PRACTICALLY THIS TASK OF HOW TO PRESERVE LIFE. RECOGNIZING THIS, TAKING THE FIRST STEPS ON A LONG AND DIFFICULT ROAD, LEADING TO ELIMINATION OF THE THREAT OF A THERMONUCLEAR DISASTER, THE POLITICAL FIGURES OF THE CAPITALIST STATES HAVE ACTED REALISTICALLY."

16. PRAVDA HINTS DESIRE TO CURB DEBATE: AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THIS DISPUTE ABOUT MILITARY POLICY, THE VARIATIONS BETWEEN A NEW BIOGRAPHY OF THE VETERAN BOLSHIEV A.S. BUBNOV AND HIS EARLIER ONES MERIT

ATTENTION (SEE FOOTNOTE). THE VARIATIONS MAY BE

REGARDED AS POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT INASMUCH AS

PRAVDA'S "HUMAN INTEREST STORIES" ARE GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD TO CONVEY A POLITICAL LESSON RATHER THAN TO ENTERTAIN THE READERSHIP.

17. THE MOST STRIKING FEATURE OF THE UPDATING OF BUBNOV'S LIFE HISTORY IS THE DISCLOSURE THAT "TOGETHER WITH M.V. FRUNZE AND S.I. GUSEV, HE WAS AN ACTIVE ORGANIZER OF THE MILITARY REFORM OF 1924 AND THE RE-STRUCTURING OF THE SYSTEM OF PARTY-POLITICAL WORK IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THE ARMY AND NAVY." THIS STATEMENT SERVES TO REMIND THE READER THAT A MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE 1924 REFORMS WAS CONCERNED WITH THE POLITICAL ACTIVITY OF

ARMY COMMUNISTS. BUBNOV HAD HERALDED HIS APPOINTMENT
ARMY COMMUNISTS. BUBNOV HAD HERALDED HIS APPOINTMENT
TO THE POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION AT THE WAR COMMISSARIAT
BY AN ORDER WHICH REVERSED HIS PREDECESSOR'S ENCOURAGEMENT OF FREE POLITICAL DISCUSSION ON THE PART OF
COMMUNISTS SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES. CENTRALISM
HAD TRIUMPHED OVER INNER-PARTY DEMOCRACY, AND BY
STAGES THE POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION--A STRONGHOLD OF
THE TROTSKYITE OPPOSITION--WAS BROUGHT UNDER THE DIRECT
CONTROL OF THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE HEADED BY THE
STALINIST FACTION. IN THE CONTEXT OF PRESENT-DAY
REALITY, PRAVDA'S ODD RAKING UP OF THIS EPISODE MAY
BE READ AS A SIGNAL OF SOMEONE'S DESIRE TO LIMIT THE
INVOLVEMENT OF MILITARY COMMUNISTS IN POLICY
DISPUTATION.

18. CONCLUSION: ONE SIDE OF BREZHNEV'S HOUSE HAS BEEN SAYING THAT NUCLEAR WAR IS SENSELESS, AND THE IMPLICATION SEEMS TO BE THAT AN ACCOMMODATING LINE AT

SALT II IS PRACTICAL. CIVILIANS, WORKING IN THE CENTRAL PARTY MACHINERY AND AT A POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE WITH TIES TO IT, HAVE VOICED THIS PRAGMATIC OUTLOOK. MILITARY IDEOLOGUES, WITH THE APPARENT BLESSING OF THE DEFENSE MINISTER, TAKE AN OPPOSING POSITION, AND INSINUATE THAT TOO MUCH FLEXIBILITY IN ARMS-CONTROL DIPLOMACY WOULD BE A DANGEROUS THING. THE WHOLE WORLD OF SOVIET ECONOMICS IS ALSO INVOLVED IN LIGHT OF THE COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES BETWEEN THE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY SECTORS OF THE PLANNED ECONOMY. IN ANY EVENT, THE MAIN LINE OF DIVISION IN THE STRATEGIC DISPUTE IS IN ALL LIKELIHOOD SOMEWHAT BLURRED BY THE EXISTENCE OF CIVILIAN MILITARISTS IN THE UPPER ECHELON OF THE CPSU AND OPPORTUNISTS IN THE MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE.

19. BREZHNEV THUS FAR APPEARS TO HAVE REMAINED ABOVE THE CONTROVERSY. AT THE OUTSET OF HIS RULE, HE TOOK CONFIDENTIAL

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OVER CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND EVIDENTLY WAS THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE MILITARY IN THE POLITBURO. WHILE HE HAS NOW BECOME THE SPOKESMAN FOR DETENTE, HE HAS NOT IGNORED THE MILITARY'S INSISTENCE ON THE NEED TO KEEP ONE'S GUARD UP. SOONER OR LATER HARD DECISIONS MUST BE TAKEN AND BREZHNEV WILL PERFORCE BECOME INTIMATELY INVOLVED. BUT HE HAS PROVED ADEPT AT FORMING CONSENSUS IN THE LEADERSHIP AND HAS BECOME THE PRINCIPAL POLICYMAKER THANKS IN PART

TO THIS TALENT. THUS EVEN WHEN THESE DECISIONS ARE TAKEN, THEY APPEAR UNLIKELY TO THREATEN HIS POWER POSITION.

20. NEVERTHELESS, THERE MAY BE LIMITS TO BREZHNEV'S TOLERANCE OF PUBLIC DISSENT ON SENSITIVE ISSUES. THE RECENT SYMBOLIC CALL IN THE COMMEMORATIVE ARTICLE ON BUBNOV FOR TIGHTER DISCIPLINE IN THE MILITARY SUPPORTS THIS LINE OF REASONING. MEANWHILE, THE DEBATE OVER STRATEGIC POSTURE CONTINUES. ITS OUTCOME WILL BE DETERMINED BY HIGH-LEVEL ASSESSMENTS OF SUCCESSES ACHIEVED THROUGH PURSUIT OF DETENTE POLICY, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS, AND PERSONAL-POWER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE RULING GROUP.

21. FOOTNOTE: BUBNOV'S 80TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY WAS CELEBRATED IN "PRAVDA" AND "IZVESTIYA" ON APRIL 6, 1963, AND IN "SOVIET RUSSIA" ON APRIL 7, 1963. THE NEW ARTICLE, WRITTEN FOR BUBNOV'S 90TH BIRTHDAY AND RUN IN "PRAVDA" ON APRIL 3, 1974, STATES THAT "IT HAS NOW BEEN ESTABLISHED" THAT BUBNOV WAS BORN ON APRIL 3, 1884, OR A YEAR LATER THAN ONCE BELIEVED. RUSH

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